

On the Eve of BirthDay/Maha Nirvan Divas of Pujya Guru Dev Papa Ji

An Interview of Pujya Guru Dev Jee, undertaken by The Editor of "THE SHOOTING STAR"

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Hinduism is Safe in Secular India

- Dharampaul

A tree, when fully loaded with fruits and flowers, bends down. Dharm Paul, though well versed in Vedanta and the Philosophy of Swami Vivekanand, is most humble and modest. Born on 25th January 1920, Dharm Paul is a faithful exponent of the eternal values as preached by Sri Rama Krishana, Swami Vivekanand, MahaPrabhu Shri Thakur Ji Maharaj and other venerated sages and seers. He translated the eight complete works of Swami Vivekanand into Urdu which alone speaks volumes for his erudite scholarship and deep learning. He resides in New Delhi.

We sent him a set of questions, and we are glad to publish below the illuminating replies.

Shooting Star Question:- In view of the fast changing opinion in favor of secularism, what is the future of Hinduism in India ?

Dharm Paul Answer- Hinduism, as defined by the architects of our constitution means abhorrence of any state religion and communalism. It does not stipulate abolition of moral values or spiritualism. Commitment for the Spiritual heritage has nothing to violate the human and ethical values. According to Swami Vivekanand, these eternal values are the basic principles of Hinduism and certainly not the priest promoted "Touch me not" ritualism.

Our constitution grants us absolute personal freedom of belief and faith. Our President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, is a moslem who offers prayers(Namaz) regularly. Our Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, has visited Belur Math and worshiped Sri Ram Krishana Deva. She has worshiped many well known temples and shrines in the south. She had paid respectful visit to India's foremost sage, the Senior Maharaj of Kanchi, Sri Acharya Chandrashekhar Saraswati. She has realized some of the best sellers of Swami Ranganathananda and participated in the

functions connected with Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo. She is a devotee of Sri Anandamayi Ma.

As such, I feel that our secularism is not going to cause any harm to Hinduism, Hinduism has stood the vicissitudes of time, faced hostile wars, survived the religious onslaughts, to move with the times. The matchless achievements accomplished by Ramakrishna Mission, the spectacular rise of Hare Krishna and Krishna-solyak movement and the gathering momentum in favor of Hindu School of Yoga evidently speak Hinduism, for from damage, is fast flourishing. Positively, its future is bright and glorious,

S. S. Ques. :-Has Hinduism lost its vitality?

D. P. Ans. :-Surely not. Its vitality lies in its indwelling beauty and fundamental truths. The beauty of these truths are abiding and non perishable. The vitality of Hinduism is eternal which knows no decay or death.

S. S. Ques. Do you think we need another Swami Vivekananda to revive the spirits of true Hinduism-not the superstitions but scientific Hinduism?

D. P. Ans-. Yes, appreciating the evolutionary process set forth by Swami Vivekananda, ho can deny such a need ? "What he achieved during the short spell of life is something unique, something unprecedented, something amazing" what I have done can be fully appreciated and repeated only by another Swami Vivekananda ?"

S. S. Ques: Do you think that today's Godmen have tarnished the image of Hinduism by their performances of miracles and magic ?

D. P. Ans: Yes. The twin principles of "Vyraga" and "Vivek" have been discarded by these Godmen who enjoy all the sensual pleasures and comforts. Even they stay with the most fabulous and corrupt persons, well known for their foul actions. They hardly bring about any

transformation in the life of their adherents. They indulge in sense gratification and self-glorification. The lives of our great seers and sages speak of the intense condemnation of such display of miracles and magic. Instead of converting mud into gold or procuring golden wrist watches from nowhere or materializing "Vibhuti" from the air, their all out efforts were centered on bringing about transformation in our thinking and actions changing the shape or form of the matter is but jugglery and cheap publicity. Changing the deep-seated outlook of a man, to convert him from sinner into saint, is a stupendous task. Unfortunately our so called

Godmen have failed to touch the grinch of this task. Some of them have been charged with forgery, profligating and wallowing in sexual orgies and all manner of vices. I have met all these godmen personally and witnessed what they perform. Allow me to call them "spiritual magicians" Capitalizing on the innocence and blind faith of our common folk.

S. S. Ques: Suggest some concrete methods by which Hinduism can come closer to Islam and Christianity.

D. P. Ans: Free and unbiased exchange of mutual thoughts should be promoted. Paramhansa Ram Krishna Dev and Swami Vivekananda have set out the golden rules for bringing about such a harmony. They said that the area of differences should be minimized and areas of agreement be expanded and enriched. It is surprising that different religions and creeds accept one God and the entire mankind as a form of brotherhood. But this principle is seldom put into practice. They indulge in conversion by fair and foul means. They change their labels and quarrel over the name, form, dress and language, for getting the real essence of religion. Deep study of different religions amply proves that it is the dogmatic approach that creates troubles, turmoil and conflict. Universalism does not break such a confusion. As a matter of fact, the area of agreement is very vast, horizonless and infinite. By adopting this fundamental principle of universal brotherhood, we could work wonders and all the strife and conflicts would vanish. If we accept the religion of love. Service to mankind, compassion and non-hatred. It is the narrow-mindedness that spoils the beauty of religion and instead leading a man to peace and harmony, breeds turmoil and rigidness, conflict, contest, bitterness, hypocrisy and blindness.

.S. S Ques.:- Why Hinduism has not produced a counterpart of Mother Teresa in the 20th century?

D. P. Ans. :-Mainly because of the priesthood and our shallow religious mindedness. Have we failed to learn what Swami Vivekananda preached to us? He said to serve "SHIVA IN JIVA". Serve God in human form. Serve and feel blessed. Feel obliged that we have been afforded an opportunity to render some offering of love to God. But we still stick to offering sweets, fruits and other offerings to stone-images, neglecting the hungry and the ill clad destitutes and paupers. We feel pleased to deposit any fabulous amount to the priests and that too for invoking blessings for us but we deny our love to our neighbors to our suffering brothers and sisters. We are self centered and selfish in our worship, in our Japa, in our rituals. It is all a curse for us. Devoid of any sympathy for the suffering fellows, we show lip sympathy and never render selfless, detached service or help to any of our fellow citizens. Our Sadhus and so-called Gurus are themselves ignorant of such a charity of love. They preach renunciation but accumulate. They ask others for donations to fetch money from others for their personal gratification and glorification. Within no

time these Sadhus build multi- storeyed buildings and shift to air conditioned apartments, living the most luxurious life. How could we learn from them the golden principle of service of Love, service of smiling and penetrating love? We concentrate on temple or Math construction work but fail to attend to the destitutes, blinds and lepers. We make our religion a waterless cloud, a deceitful living, a false life of dry rituals. We are never pure and that is why we do not understand the charm of distributing pure selfless service of Love. Even seeing the thrilling example of Mother Teresa, we do not care to learn from her the charity of Love.